

Anti-virus Exposed!



If you think your anti-virus software has got your PC covered, think again. Simon Edwards puts 12 packages through our unique attack tests – and the results are shocking

You have a firewall, you do backups and your anti-virus software is up to date. Are you safe? We'd like to say yes, but our tests paint a scary picture.

Running an anti-virus program on your PC is mandatory these days. While some optional utilities can speed up your system or make it easier to handle, an anti-virus package is necessary to protect your PC from damage caused by viruses, worms and Trojans. Sadly, this adds to the ongoing cost of running a computer.

You need to make sure the program you choose is effective, easy to use and won't break the bank. We've tested products from some of the biggest names in the anti-virus market, alongside some you may not have heard of before. The results are alarming.

You may think the main difference between programs is their price and usability, but you'd be wrong. While they do vary in these categories, we have found there is a dramatic disparity in their abilities to detect viruses. It is possible that the anti-virus program you are using right now isn't actually protecting you properly.

ANTI-VIRUS ADVANCES

Anti-virus software is a combination of a program and a subscription service. In some cases, such as with McAfee's VirusScan, you can subscribe annually and receive upgrades to the software as they become available. This is like renting software, which isn't usually popular with customers. Imagine renting Microsoft Office or Paint Shop Pro. We'd prefer to buy it once and leave it at that. Security software needs to be updated continually, however, so buyers seem happy with renting.

Now security companies are moving towards selling the service rather than the software. Symantec will soon launch its Genesis service, which will provide a

complete security package on a monthly subscription basis. Microsoft's OneCare service is a similar idea.

Today's anti-virus programs rely on databases that describe viruses. When you download updates you are downloading what anti-virus companies call 'definitions'. An alternative is for the software to detect virus-like behaviour, a technique known as heuristics. Heuristic analysis is rarely foolproof so anti-virus programs still tend to rely on definitions. If you don't have the latest definitions, your PC is at risk from the latest viruses. This is a vulnerability anti-virus experts have been trying to fix for years. Symantec's Genesis system will tackle this using a hybrid of definition updates and heuristics updates. Rather than sending out updates of definitions, which can be a few megabytes of data at a time, it will distribute a small number of definitions for the most current threats as well as new heuristic updates. When Genesis launches, we'll test whether it catches current threats in a more efficient way.

ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

Rootkits pose a new threat, and many of the anti-virus packages tested here try to discover them. Rootkits hide on the system at a very low level, subverting the entire system. If successful, they are hard to detect. Even Sony used rootkit technology recently to try to protect its copyright on a number of music CDs. Sony was criticised and has since removed the software from its products.

Spyware is also a major threat, and is one that anti-virus companies have decided to address. Many products tested here have some form of spyware protection. But we would still use a combination of dedicated anti-spyware utilities for now. Watch out for our anti-spyware software test in the October issue.

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How we test Anti-virus software

An anti-virus program needs to detect and remove viruses effectively. Viruses can enter a computer in many ways: via email, from an infected CD, flash drive, web download, from a file server or even over an internet messaging (IM) chat session. We have tested the most likely routes, attempting to infect our test systems with the latest and most common threats. We've also thrown in Trojans that hackers and practical jokers use to take control of your PC.

Each test system runs Windows XP Professional with Service Pack 2 and patched with the latest security updates. Default settings are left intact. Windows is told not to download further updates during the testing period. The anti-virus programs are installed and updated on the same day so none benefits unfairly from having newer updates.

The test PCs are located on a secure network that allows us to monitor malicious activity should an anti-virus program fail to detect a virus and allow it to run. Viruses are never allowed to leak out on to the internet. The sample viruses that we used were supplied by email security company MessageLabs.

Sometimes virus files can become corrupt and fail to work. They may be detected by some anti-virus programs but not others. All the samples used in these tests have been verified as working viruses.

In situations where an anti-virus program failed to detect a virus or Trojan, we actually infected the system to prove that the threat was real. In one case, with ZoneAlarm, the firewall part of the program prevented the Trojan calling home. The system was still compromised, however.

KASPERSKY Anti-Virus 2006

★★★★★

£28 inc VAT



This package, available from the beginning of May, includes all the features you would expect of an anti-virus program. The scanners will test email and web traffic, plus files on the hard disk. You can scan files, folders and disks using the context menu or from the main program. An updated, friendly interface gives access to lots of options, many suitable for advanced users.

However, if you don't want to get your hands dirty playing with advanced settings or exporting virus scan reports in CSV format, you don't have to. Simply install the software, let it update itself, and it scans your system regularly. A single slider selects one of three security levels.

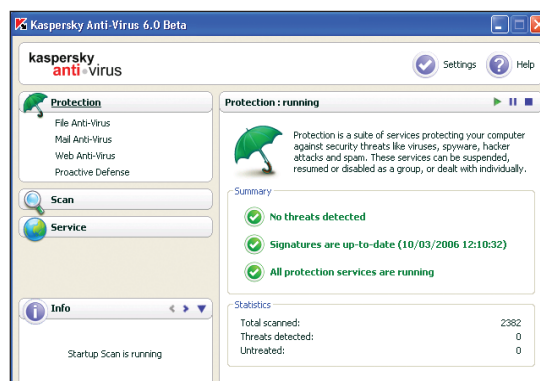
The software now includes anti-rootkit detection and removal to get rid of this latest threat. It also has a behaviour-based detection system called Proactive Defense, which monitors programs when they run and looks for suspicious behaviour. If it detects a threat, such as a Trojan, it alerts the user and provides an opportunity to

undo changes the bad program might have made, such as creating files and making changes to the Registry.

CHECKING FOR CHANGES

The software monitors the Windows Registry to check for changes, and the email notification system comes in handy if you want to track the health of more than one PC. Your family PC could email you about suspicious activity, for example. A password feature means the anti-virus software can be locked, preventing other users turning it off or changing its settings.

Kaspersky Anti-Virus used to include an option to make a set of anti-virus floppy disks that you could use to boot and scan an infected system, using the latest virus definitions. This feature was missing from the 2005 release of Kaspersky's Windows security software but at last it has returned, only this time you can create a bootable CD. This is more convenient than messing



▲ Kaspersky's clear, friendly interface has been updated and you can use the context menu to scan files, folders and disks

around with a fistful of 3.5" floppies. So far so good, but how did Kaspersky's latest anti-virus program perform in our tests? Perfectly, as it turned out. It was one of only three products tested to detect every sample. Interestingly, the other two (F-Secure Anti-Virus and Steganos AntiVirus) also use Kaspersky technology.

In previous reviews, Kaspersky missed out on our top awards as it was more expensive than its rivals. But it is now one of the best-priced options available. If you run Kaspersky Anti-Virus 5, upgrading is a no-brainer. If you are ready to renew your Norton AntiVirus or other package, consider changing to Kaspersky. F-Secure users may as well stay as they are, as their renewal fees are the same as those charged by Kaspersky.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Effective detection
- ✓ Handy extra features
- ✓ Reasonable price

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 98 or later, 150MHz Pentium processor, 32MB RAM, 50MB disk space
SUPPLIER Kaspersky 08700 113461
DETAILS www.kaspersky.com



Offer open to UK residents aged 18 or over only; offer available to purchasers of CLP-550, CLP-550N, CLP-600, CLP-600N, ML-2550, ML-2551N, ML-3560, ML-3561N and ML-3561ND Samsung printers only; qualifying models of printer must be purchased new (not second-hand) between 1st April 2006 and 31st July 2006 from a retailer in the UK and originally sourced from Samsung Electronics (UK) Ltd (check with retailer for confirmation); offer only available to end-users; 5 Year Warranty is provided on same terms as standard one year warranty except it lasts for five years following purchase; Value of 5 year warranty based on SSP (suggested selling price) of extended warranty for CLP-600N; 5 Year Warranty documentation will be sent

SYMANTEC
Norton AntiVirus 2006

★★★★
£36 inc VAT

Norton AntiVirus has been around a long time and has established itself as the definitive anti-virus program in most people's minds. It's in all the high-street computer shops and, if you've bought a new PC or motherboard, chances are you've received a few months' worth of Norton AntiVirus protection. Even the downloadable Google Pack, a free bundle of 'essential' utilities available from <http://pack.google.com>, includes a limited version of the software.

We've had mixed results with Norton AntiVirus over the years. In some tests it will pick up everything we throw at it; other times it will miss a few surprises we've included to trip up the unwary anti-virus vendors. This year we were shocked at how poorly it fared when faced with some Trojans in our sample collection. It missed three, letting them run.

Seven of the products tested here beat it when detecting files, including long-term rival McAfee VirusScan and even Grisoft's AVG Free Edition.

Then there's the price. With the exception of Trend

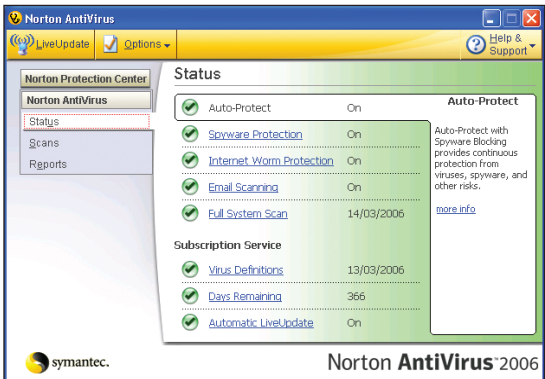
Micro's PC-cillin, which is a suite of security software that includes a firewall and other utilities, this is the most expensive product to buy. It also costs more than any other product to renew after the first year; the price is nearly three times that of Steganos AntiVirus and £8 more than the average, not including the free software.

It is clear where Symantec's efforts have gone with this release. The interface is virtually beyond criticism. If we reviewed software on how it looked Norton AntiVirus would win an award. Having said that, Kaspersky's interface is also excellent.

The Norton Status window is essentially a marketing device similar to McAfee's Security Center, offering a clear view of where your PC's security is lacking. If you want maximum security you need to install the full range of Norton software.

CAN OF WORMS

There are some good points to this program, though. It



▲ Norton's interface is clear, but the Status window is really a marketing device that shows you what you are lacking

has the full range of disk, email and spyware scanners, and you can run these from the program or using the Windows context menu. The reports are clear and the scheduling facilities are flexible. The Worm Protection feature is actually a built-in firewall, and is a suitable replacement for the standard Windows firewall. Another minor plus is that activating the software is a breeze. Compared to McAfee's system, it's delightful.

Symantec is on the verge of releasing a brand new anti-virus service (see page 129), so regular Norton AntiVirus users are likely to move to this rather than pay the high renewal fee for their software. Still, in terms of cost and performance, this year's release left us cold.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Great interface
- ✗ Disappointing detection
- ✗ Expensive

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 2000 or XP, 300MHz Pentium processor, 256MB RAM, 150MB disk space
SUPPLIER www.amazon.co.uk
DETAILS www.symantec.com



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ALWIL

avast! Antivirus 4.6 (Home Edition)



Free

The last time we reviewed Alwil's avast! Antivirus (Home Edition) we liked its virus detection but were bemused by its dual interface. It has a normal interface for changing settings for the different scanners, and a futuristic-looking Simple User Interface window for running scans. Users will get used to it quickly, and it can be skinned if you fancy a change.

As with most anti-virus software, avast! continually monitors your system for incoming viruses, which means that most of the time you can leave it to

keep an eye on things. But there is no shortage of settings to play with, which is impressive for a free program. This is in strong contrast to AVG Free Edition, which is more limited. You need to know what you're doing, though, as some of the

settings are designed for computer experts. Do you want to disable scanning for WSH script files? If you know about Windows Scripting Host files, you might know the answer.

The software will happily scan email, P2P traffic and files that come in via internet messaging. You can tell it to

SUMMARY

- ✓ Free
- ✗ Poor detection
- ✗ Non-standard interface

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 95 or later (non-server versions), Pentium processor, 50MB disk space
 SUPPLIER www.avast.com
 DETAILS www.avast.com



▲ Avast! has a normal interface for changing settings, but a futuristic one for running scans

ignore certain file types, if you're sure about their contents. But avast! Antivirus 4.6 wasn't sure about the contents of our samples. It was the least-effective virus scanner tested here, narrowly beating Panda Titanium to the bottom spot. It ignored several Trojans, one of which successfully disabled the Windows firewall, allowing potential attackers remote control of the system.

It might be free, but until avast!'s detection abilities improve we'd rather pay for protection rather than compromise with this free package.

BULLGUARD

Internet Security 6.1

ANTI-VIRUS RATING ★★

£35 inc VAT

BullGuard combines an anti-virus scanner with a backup service, a firewall and an anti-spam filter. It combines everything in one interface, which has been improved since the previous version, reviewed in the June 2005 issue.

Application protection was noisy, alerting you to regular events that it admits are harmless. You may find it interesting to see an alert that says Internet Explorer and the NDIS User mode I/O Driver have been granted access to the internet, but most won't. Such alerts are distracting and pointless.

The anti-virus settings are comprehensive, and scheduling scans is simple. Enabling and disabling email scanning and excluding certain file types from scanning is straightforward. This is also one of the few programs that provides a useful progress bar during scanning. Some, including Norton AntiVirus, just display an animation that gives no indication of how close the scan is to completion.

When we reviewed its virus-detecting abilities we were disappointed that it missed a rootkit and three Trojans. It did catch the

SUMMARY

- ✓ Easy to use
- ✗ Poor detection
- ✗ Expensive to renew

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 2000 or XP, Pentium processor, 64MB RAM, 200MB disk space
 SUPPLIER www.bullguard.com
 DETAILS www.bullguard.com



▲ BullGuard's improved interface combines an anti-virus scanner, firewall and anti-spam filter

regular viruses, the most likely threats to come down your internet connection, but we expect decent anti-virus software to prevent Trojans. It claims to detect unknown viruses, but we'll wait until it detects known ones before believing that.

Combine this poor protection with an annual renewal price that is joint highest with Norton AntiVirus, and the deal looks unattractive. We'd rather not use an internet security package that lacks a strong anti-virus element.

ESET

NOD 32 2.5



£27 inc VAT

NOD 32 2.5 is essentially the same product we reviewed in our last anti-virus round-up in *Shopper* February 2005. The interface pulls together the different modules, which each address a different type of virus scanning. The Resident Module (AMON) is a real-time scanner that keeps an eye on virus activity, while others check incoming and outgoing email, web pages and other downloads and Office documents.

The scanner can be set to scan on a regular basis

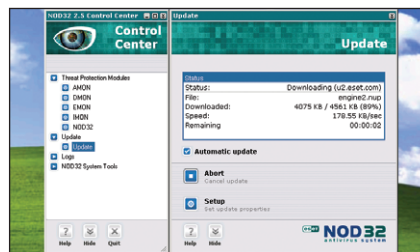
using a flexible, wizard-driven scheduler. There are more settings than most users are going to need. The unusual interface and wealth of settings mean that the program takes an effort to get to grips with fully.

Experts used to handling infected code, or dealing with different types of threat, will appreciate Profiles, which let you configure the program's settings and save them into reloadable sets. These can also be recalled by scheduled scans and the scanner in the Windows context menu.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Good virus detection
- ✓ Plenty of options
- ✗ Quite expensive

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 95 or later, 300MHz Pentium processor, 128MB RAM, 30MB disk space
 SUPPLIER www.aspect-systems.com
 DETAILS www.nod32uk.com



▲ NOD's interface pulls together all the different modules, each tackling a different kind of scan

NOD 32 2 detected nearly every file we threw at it, missing only one password-stealing Trojan. This makes it more accurate than most of the programs tested here, with the exceptions of F-Secure Anti-Virus, Kaspersky Anti-Virus and Steganos Antivirus. This is a competent product that provides good security, though with an old-fashioned interface. But it's more expensive to buy and renew than Steganos Antivirus.

F-SECURE Anti-Virus 2006

★★★★★
£33 inc VAT

F-Secure Anti-Virus 2006 looks and feels similar to the 2005 version, though it now comes with integrated anti-spyware protection. Previously you had to buy the F-Secure Internet Security package, which included a rebranded version of Lavasoft's Ad-Aware

Professional. The spyware protection extends to locking down Internet Explorer's settings, blocking ActiveX and even preventing downloads if you need to.

F-Secure's anti-virus software always performs strongly in our tests, and it was no surprise when it

detected 100 per cent of the viruses and Trojans that we uploaded to the target PC.

Using the software is easy thanks to the sensible interface. If you want to know about current threats, the built-in news feed will let you know what's out there. This can be turned off if you prefer.

The scanning schedule has an option to start after five minutes of inactivity. This is handy; trying to work on a computer that is running a virus scan is frustrating as it slows to a crawl.

The price of F-Secure Anti-Virus has risen since last

SUMMARY

- ✓ Excellent virus detection
- ✓ Very easy to use
- ✗ Uncompetitive price

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 98 or later, Pentium II processor, 64MB RAM, 190MB disk space
SUPPLIER F-Secure 0845 8903300
DETAILS www.f-secure.com



▲ F-Secure has a sensible interface that keeps you in the loop about checks and threats

year, from £26 including VAT. This increase makes the software pricier than Kaspersky Anti-Virus 2006, which is just as effective at battling viruses. If you use F-Secure's anti-virus software there's little reason to change, as renewal costs are the same. For new buyers, Kaspersky Anti-Virus 2006 and Steganos AntiVirus 2006 are better deals.

GRISOFT AVG Free Edition 7.1

★★★★★
Free

Ever popular among *Shopper* readers, Grisoft's free anti-virus scanner has been keeping PCs clear of viruses for years. Sadly, it looks its age. Despite an update last year, this program looks like it's come out of the ark.

Still, looks aren't as important as effectiveness in the anti-virus world, and AVG is still delivering the goods. It missed two of our samples, allowing the Trojans to run and install themselves. However, it performed far better than avast!, the other free anti-virus program in our test,

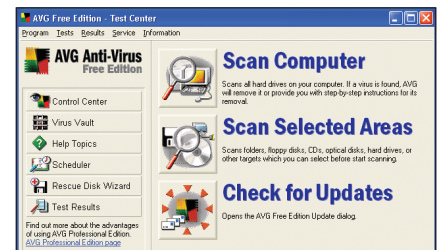
and it even found more nasty files than expensive products such as Norton AntiVirus 2006, BullGuard 6.1 and Panda Titanium, which cost £36, £35 and £30 respectively.

The email scanner has a handy set of features, including the ability to move attached zip files to the virus vault quarantine area automatically if they are password protected. It can remove all attachments, and be set to scan just messages with attachments. The last setting could speed things up if you're downloading a backlog of email.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Free
- ✓ Quite effective
- ✗ Annoying prompts to upgrade

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 95 or later, 486 processor, 32MB RAM, 15MB disk space
SUPPLIER <http://free.grisoft.com>
DETAILS <http://free.grisoft.com>



▲ AVG's free anti-virus scanner is looking its age, but it still delivers the goods

Grisoft wants users to upgrade to the Professional version, which has a better interface and more features. It costs £34 including VAT for a two-year licence. The Free edition tantalises its users with options that, when you click on them, say you need to upgrade. This is annoying, the restricted scheduling being a particular problem.

If you can see past this and can't afford to buy a more effective and pleasant product such as Steganos AntiVirus, AVG Free Edition is fine.

McAFEE VirusScan 2006

★★★★★
£36 inc VAT

The main rival to Norton AntiVirus in the UK, McAfee VirusScan is a popular program that you'll see in the shops and preinstalled on PCs. In previous tests it's been a close-run thing between these two, with

the end result coming down to a few pounds on renewal fees or the odd missed Trojan.

In this regard there is no change. They both cost the same, as McAfee has put up its prices. Their detection rates are similar, although VirusScan caught one extra Trojan. We're not happy the

two market leaders missed Trojans you could encounter on the internet. The fact VirusScan found this extra Trojan gets it an extra point.

We were tempted to remove the point for the outdated interface. Last year McAfee highlighted the package's new interface (changed from blue to red). It hasn't even bothered with a colour change this time.

You only need to register the software once when you install it. But McAfee's system is annoying and clunky. It relies on ActiveX and pop-ups

SUMMARY

- ✓ Fair detection
- ✓ Reasonable interface
- ✗ Expensive

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 98 or later, Pentium 150MHz processor, 32MB RAM, 40MB disk space
SUPPLIER www.amazon.co.uk
DETAILS www.mcafee.com/uk



▲ McAfee's interface is barely distinguishable from its predecessor and is looking outdated

that add unnecessary complexity to getting updates you've paid for. Now Windows XP Service Pack 2 includes protection against sites opening pop-up windows in Internet Explorer, you may struggle just to get things working.

VirusScan is OK, but other programs look nicer, work better and cost less. If you have a copy installed, wait until the year of updates expires then switch to one of our award-winners. ➔

PANDA

Titanium 2006 antivirus + antispyware



£30 inc VAT

Panda has had a rough ride in our tests since we started reviewing its anti-virus software. It has a poor record for detecting Trojans, although it has always been able to detect more common viruses we've exposed it to. This time, Panda surprised us by being worse at detecting Trojans.

With the exception of avast! Antivirus, Panda Titanium 2006 was the worst on test at detecting Trojans. It doesn't even have the excuse that it's free. In fact, it is more expensive than our two winners, which detected all the malicious files, and its renewal price is above average.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Nice interface
- ✗ Poor detection
- ✗ Expensive

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 98 or later, 150MHz Pentium processor, 96MB RAM, 110MB disk space
SUPPLIER www.pandasoftware.co.uk
DETAILS www.pandasoftware.co.uk

With an anti-virus program so inappropriately priced it's almost not worth commenting on its interface or other features, but to its credit the program is easy to use, with a simple interface. It also has a rescue disk option for creating floppy disks or a CD/DVD that you can use to boot up an infected system.

Script protection involves indiscriminately blocking script files, so if you work with VBScripts or JScript files you'll need to disable this setting. Titanium monitors Internet Explorer settings and will prompt you if something attempts to change them. You can opt to lock the settings down and prevent anything making changes.



▲ Titanium's Rescue Disk Wizard enables you to create rescue floppy disks to clean up infections

The main screen gives reassuring status reports, telling you the system is protected against spyware and unknown threats. It uses Panda's TruPrevent Technologies system to detect virus-like behaviour – but it has trouble detecting known viruses let alone unknown ones.

We are not confident a PC relying on Panda's anti-virus software is safe from harm. The high price and renewal costs merely compound the program's faults.

STEGANOS

AntiVirus 2006



£20 inc VAT



Steganos doesn't make its own anti-virus software, but rebrands Kaspersky Personal Anti-Virus and sells it at a knock-down price. So you can buy top-of-the-range virus protection for very little. The annual renewal fee is the lowest of any paid-for programs tested here.

The virus scanner was as effective as other Kaspersky-based products we've seen, detecting every virus and Trojan uploaded to the test system. There is an optional extended anti-virus database you can command the program to use. This may well increase detection capabilities, but we're happy with the standard database.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Effective detection
- ✓ Very low cost
- ✗ Fewer features than Kaspersky

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 2000 or XP, Pentium processor, 128MB RAM, 25MB disk space
SUPPLIER Steganos 00 8800 7834 2667
DETAILS www.steganos.com

Users of Kaspersky Personal 5 will find little difference using Steganos AntiVirus 2006, though there are a few extras such as a Profiles option that lets you group settings into presets that can be recalled quickly. The Protection level slider enables you to set the general level of security without wading into pages of settings. Scanning can be run from within the program or using the Windows context menus.

The software is not as fully featured as Kaspersky's, lacking more advanced anti-rootkit features and Proactive Defense. You can't 'undo' the actions of a virus that executes itself. You can't create rescue disks, either.

Spyware protection is provided by definitions stored



▲ Steganos gives clear warnings when critical scans have not been performed

in the anti-virus database, but there is no browser monitoring to prevent settings being changed by any spyware that manages to break through the anti-virus defences.

The new features in this program are so powerful and attractive, and Steganos is charging so little for it, you'd be mad to ignore this deal. If your budget is stretched and you want great anti-virus protection, Steganos AntiVirus 2006 is ideal.

						BEST BUY				BUDGET BUY
DEVELOPER	ALWIL	BULLGUARD	ESET	F-SECURE	GRISOFT	KASPERSKY	McAFEE	PANDA	STEGANOS	
Product	avast! Antivirus 4.6 (Home Edition)	Internet Security 6.1	NOD 32 2.5	Anti-Virus 2006	AVG Free Edition 7.1	Anti-Virus 2006	VirusScan 2006	Titanium 2006 antivirus + antispyware	AntiVirus 2006	
Rating	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★★	
Email scanner	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Instant messaging scanner	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	
Rescue disc	No	No	No	Bootable	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Price including VAT	Free	£35	£27	£33	Free	£28	£36	£30	£20	
Length of initial update period	N/A	1 year	1 year	1 year	N/A	1 year	1 year	1 year	1 year	
Cost of further subscription	N/A	£28	£16	£18	N/A	£18	£17	£24	£12	
Length of further subscription period	N/A	1 year	1 year	1 year	N/A	1 year	1 year	1 year	1 year	
Supplier	www.avast.com	www.bullguard.com	www.aspect-systems.com	www.f-secure.com	http://free.grisoft.com	www.kaspersky.com	www.amazon.co.uk	www.pandasoftware.co.uk	www.steganos.com	
Phone	Web only	Web only	01202 548888	08458 903300	Web only	08700 113461	Web only	Web only	008800 7834 2667	
Details	www.avast.com	www.bullguard.com	www.nod32uk.com	www.f-secure.com	http://free.grisoft.com	www.kaspersky.com	www.mcafee.com/uk	www.pandasoftware.co.uk	www.steganos.com	

TREND MICRO

PC-cillin Internet Security 14

ANTI-VIRUS RATING ★★★★★

£38 inc VAT

The PC-cillin anti-virus program is part of Trend Micro's Internet Security suite, which also includes anti-spam software and a firewall. We concentrated on its anti-virus capabilities and were pleased with the results.

Previous tests have found PC-cillin is good at detecting viruses but patchy at discovering Trojans. For the first time in four years we can report that the program has decent Trojan detection. It missed one, and missed the rootkit, but outperformed five of the programs tested here and is as effective as two of the others.

PC-cillin scans incoming and outgoing email, as well as messages downloaded from webmail accounts

such as Hotmail. The real-time and on-demand scanners are accompanied by real-time anti-spyware protection and an interesting feature called Vulnerability Check. This looks for updates to Windows and Microsoft Office, alerting you when it's time to patch your computer.

Scan scheduling options are comprehensive, and you can create specific rules such as 'Scan all Word files'. Infected files can be saved automatically before being treated. A quarantine feature is available to hold files that can't be cleaned. Sadly, there's no facility to create a bootable CD, and the disc containing the software isn't bootable, either.

Although it is the most expensive package on test, it's

SUMMARY

- ✓ Fair detection
- ✓ Plenty of features
- ✗ Expensive just as anti-virus program

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 98 or later, 233MHz Pentium processor, 128MB RAM, 120MB disk space
SUPPLIER Trend Micro 01628 400500
DETAILS <http://uk.trendmicro-europe.com>



▲ PC-cillin's real-time and on-demand scanners come with real-time anti-spyware protection

worth remembering that this is a security suite rather than a standalone anti-virus program. Considering its full range of features, it is good value. The annual renewal fee is high, though, and unless you want to use its firewall and anti-spam modules, we'd consider it too expensive just as an anti-virus program. We know from in-depth tests that the firewall is an excellent choice, so with that in mind we'd be happy to run this software on our PCs.

ZONE LABS

ZoneAlarm Antivirus 6

ANTI-VIRUS RATING ★★★

£20 inc VAT

Best known for its free and easy-to-use firewall, ZoneAlarm is now available in several flavours. This one includes a basic anti-virus element, which forms a small part of a rounded firewall and application control program.

ZoneAlarm Antivirus is not an expensive program, costing well below the average price of the others we tested. Its renewal price is low, and on this basis, it looks like an attractive prospect, not least because its firewall is flexible and effective.

The anti-virus system is relatively discreet and there aren't many settings. You can enable or disable the email scanner and play with a couple of advanced settings including a

heuristics option that is enabled by default. There is a scan schedule option, too, but it's very basic. A quarantine area for infected files is available, and you can select which files or folders to scan. But that's about it.

The virus scanner has a progress bar as annoying as Norton AntiVirus's. It bounces back and forward, rather than indicating its progress.

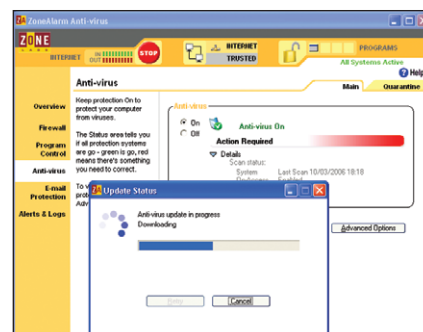
The other main part of the interface is a window that shows if the anti-virus system is on or off, and also indicates if definitions are too old.

Performance in detecting viruses and Trojans is not great, although the combination of firewall and anti-virus software is a powerful one. The anti-virus

SUMMARY

- ✓ Inexpensive
- ✗ Poor virus detection
- ✗ Few settings

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE Requires Windows 98 or later, 450MHz Pentium processor, 48MB RAM, 50MB disk space
SUPPLIER www.zonelabs.com
DETAILS www.zonelabs.com



▲ ZoneAlarm has a friendly interface, but the progress bar for virus scans is quite annoying

scanner missed four of our Trojans. But when one tried to contact the internet the firewall stopped it. This doesn't excuse the anti-virus scanner's slackness, and we don't like the idea of malware running on our PC even if it's under control.

The price is tempting, but the virus detection is poor. If we were buying on a budget, we would install the free ZoneAlarm firewall and complement it with Steganos AntiVirus 2006.

SYMANTEC	TREND MICRO	ZONE LABS
Norton AntiVirus 2006	PC-cillin Internet Security 14	ZoneAlarm Antivirus 6
★★★	★★★★	★★★
Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes	Yes
Bootable	No	No
£36	£38	£20
1 year	1 year	1 year
£28	£25	£17
1 year	1 year	1 year
www.amazon.co.uk	http://uk.trendmicro-europe.com	www.zonelabs.com
Web only	01628 400500	Web only
www.symantec.com	http://uk.trendmicro-europe.com	www.zonelabs.com

Labs verdict Anti-virus software

Investing in an anti-virus program can be a lottery. You cannot rely on slick interfaces and shiny boxes in PC World to indicate virus-catching abilities. The big names are expensive and they are not the most effective. This month's winners are from companies that you may never have heard of, but their products are great value and very effective.

Kaspersky Labs Anti-Virus 2006 is the anti-virus program we recommend. Its price is right, it has an interface vastly improved from previous versions, which rivals anything else we've seen, and it's great at stopping

viruses. It ticks all the boxes, and it wins the Best Buy award.

F-Secure's Anti-Virus 2006 is still a strong contender, but loses out on price. Next to the Kaspersky and Steganos products, its price is not that attractive. However, current users should stay with it as the renewal fee is the same as that for Kaspersky Anti-Virus 2006.

Steganos AntiVirus 2006 is ideal for those who don't have a lot to spend on anti-virus software but demand top-quality protection. It's cheap to buy, remarkably cheap to renew and effective at stopping viruses. It wins our Budget Buy award.